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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT INVESTING IN BETTER HEALTH CARE FOR OTTAWA RESIDENTS

Increased Funding To The Ottawa Hospital Will Strengthen Services

OTTAWA – The McGuinty government is continuing to invest in better health care for Ottawa area residents with $20 million in funding to The Ottawa Hospital, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"Our government is ensuring Ontario's hospitals have the resources they need to strengthen critical programs and services," Smitherman said. "This investment provides additional support to the hospital to ensure it can continue provide Ottawa area residents with access to quality health care services."

The government is providing a base funding increase of $20 million to The Ottawa Hospital. This brings the hospital's total base allocation for 2006/07 to $580.9 million, a 10.1 per cent increase in base funding over 2005/06.

Prior to receiving this funding, The Ottawa Hospital underwent peer reviews to help it achieve a balanced budget. Through this process, CEOs of hospitals that are of similar size and type reviewed the hospital's operations and provided it with specific recommendations on how to improve its efficiency and find a workable plan to balance its budget.

The new funding is conditional on the hospital signing its accountability agreement that commits it to balancing its budgets.

"Today's announcement marks a significant milestone for The Ottawa Hospital and complements expansion on all three of our campuses," said Dr. Jack Kitts, President and CEO of The Ottawa Hospital. "It will allow us to continue to provide state-of-the-art patient care, education and research."

In addition to the 2006/07 base funding, The Ottawa Hospital has also received:

- A total of $9.5 million in one-time funding as part of the Wait Times Strategy to perform 7,800 more MRI exams, 2,614 more CT exams, 1,000 more cataract surgeries, 405 additional cancer surgeries, and 400 more hip and knee total joint replacements

- A commitment of $640,544 in capital funding in 2006/07 to make needed upgrades to keep its facility in top condition for patients.

"I am proud of our government's record of success as we continue to move forward with our health care partners," Smitherman said. "Today's announcement allows The Ottawa Hospital to get on with doing the day-to-day job of providing essential and vital health services to Ontarians."

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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